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Fleet Street's Espionage Fever

By Leonard Downie Jr.
Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, Nov. 20 — Many of the prime suspects are dead, and most of the rest are older men who have not been in positions of influence for decades. But the great British spy hunt continues, adding new names each week to the list of confessed and suspected Soviet agents in Britain's security and diplomatic services during and after World War II.

The hunt began with the unmasking two years ago of the queen's art curator, the former Sir Anthony Blunt, as a Soviet spy, an accomplice of previously exposed traitors Anthony Burgess, Donald Maclean and H.A.R. (Kim) Philby, who had long ago fled to Moscow. Since then, the search for other spies has been pressed by the journalists of Fleet Street competing for new revelations and by shadowy but influential figures in the intelligence community here contending there is still a cover-up of worse treachery than has been revealed so far.

Besides the competitive pressures of British journalism and some tempting leaks from the deeply divided intelligence community, the enduring media fascination with spy stories is explained by the recent realization of the extent of Soviet penetration of the British government and intelligence services, the long government coverup of most of it, the tantalizing mystery that still shrouds these events and the traditional British love of detective and spy thrillers.

In recent weeks, two confessed wartime spies in British military intelligence have been exposed, suspicion has been cast on many more people alive and dead named in books and newspaper articles, and an argument has been revived inside the intelligence community over whether the late Sir Roger Hollis, head of Britain's MI5 internal security service from 1956 until 1966, was actually the most highly placed Soviet mole of all.

London's Sunday Times newspaper scored the latest coup by reporting that wartime British military intelligence officer and former Columbia Pictures executive Leo Long had confessed in the mid-1960s to being a spy recruited by Blunt. Long confirmed the report in a series of interviews after the Times' story was published, and said that he was interrogated about his activities but never prosecuted.

Now the newspaper is seeking to publish a story about allegations that a man with leftist ties in France a half century ago was connected to Blunt's "spy ring" while working as a magazine editor in the United States during and after World War II. [In Washington, the man was identified as Louis Dolivet, a Frenchman born in Romania.]

The subject of the story, who strongly denies the allegation, blocked its publication last Sunday by obtaining a court injunction in London against any Sunday Times story saying he was a spy or alleging that anyone thought he was spy. The part of the injunction covering allegations that he might have been a spy was lifted this week, allowing the Sunday Times to publish the story if it is cleared by the newspaper's libel lawyers, according to Sunday Times executive editor Don Berry.

Berry admitted that the subject of this story was a significantly "littler fish than some of the others," but contended that "every time a little bit sneaks out, it confirms that we still don't know the full story of those years."

"It's a wonderful sport, isn't it, chasing spies," he added. "Each big new revelation starts it all over again, and we join the chase. I think there is a lot more to be told, and we're going to continue pursuing it."

The Observer newspaper also joined the hunt with excerpts from a new book by spy-chasing free-lance journalist Nigel West that hinted at Long's recruitment as a spy by Blunt at Cambridge University. West also brought to public attention, after nearly 40 years, a former British Army officer named Ormond Uren, who was court-martialed during World War II and imprisoned for passing some information about his work in a sensitive military installation to the then national organizer of the Communist Party in Britain.

But West mistakenly described Uren as having been part of a group of students at Cambridge University who committed themselves to communism as the only means to prevent the takeover of Europe by fascism at the outset of the war. Burgess, Maclean, Philby, Blunt and Long all came from this group at Cambridge, centered on an exclusive debating society of mostly upper class, left-leaning intellectuals.

Uren, who was educated at Edinburgh University in Scotland, then added to the mountain of spy journalism in the media here with an article in the daily Times contending that if he had been among the privileged Cambridge set he "might now be in possession of immunity from prosecution [like Blunt and Long] or be drinking vodka and Georgian wine in a luxury KGB ghetto in Moscow," as Burgess, Philby and Maclean were able to do.

Journalists, government officials and members of Parliament here attribute much of the zeal of the continuing spy hunt to widespread resentment that many of the spies recruited from the Cambridge elite of the 1930s have gone unpunished and to the mystery created by tight government secrecy shrouding each case until its disclosure in a book or newspaper article.

A book by former BBC producer Andrew Boyle led to Blunt's unmasking and a book by veteran British journalist Chapman Pincher made public the deep divisions within the intelligence community over whether Hollis, who died in 1973, was a Soviet agent when he ran MI5.

"If it had not been for Boyle's book, Blunt would still be working in Buckingham Palace," said Pincher, who also argued that his own revelations, criticized by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as not wholly accurate, may finally force a conclusive determination of whether Hollis "was the spy of the century."

Pincher said the Cambridge-recruited spies were "an extraordinary set who could have been running the country" if Burgess, Ma-

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